

Berks County Fire Service Working Group Meeting Minutes

March 29, 2012

ATTENDANCE

ZONE 1	X Bob Schegan (46)	X Mark George (11)	
ZONE 2	Chuck Snyder (50)	X Eric Schrack (41)	Ken Quell (37)
ZONE 3	X Lester Feick (27)	X Bob Martin (47)	
ZONE 4	Scot Landis (67)	X Bruce Longenecker (79)	X Mark Hostetter (85)
ZONE 5/6	Matt Gehman (97)	X Chris Schaeffer (97)	
	X Eric Fox (34)	X Chris Stevens (17)	
ZONE 7	X Stephen Serba (RFD)	Ron Wentzel (RFD)	X Thomas Rehr (RFD)
BERKS DES:	X Brian Gottschall	X Craig Wanner	X Tony Flores
BCFA:	X Roger Weidenhammer	Leon Grim	
BCFPA:	X Bob Englebach		
OTHERS:			

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Chris Stevens at 1815 hours in the Berks County Department of Emergency Services Conference room, located in the Direct Link building, Bernville Road, Leesport, PA.

The minutes of the February 22, 2012 were not approved as members were not e-mailed draft copies for review.

DISCUSSION

Box Alarms: All agencies' cards are in the Access-formatted system.

Training Committee: The next round of classes being made available are on the training website www.berkscountyfiretraining.com. Turnout has been great for classes held so far. Many materials have been donated to help defray costs.

CAD:

1. Testing on the New World CAD is tentatively set to begin in April with a target "go live" date of June. Field user training with the MCTs must still be done; the ability to schedule this training at the convenience of the end-users will be a strong driver in the completion of this project.
2. Discussion was re-engaged regarding EMS and Fire services having access to CAD through MCTs. If a fire company/department or EMS organization is willing to financially commit to purchasing an acceptable laptop (i.e. Toughbook), software licensing, and paying for an air card, they would be controlled through the county's proxy server. Other reporting software (i.e. EMStat, Fire Programs, On-Scene Explorer) will be investigated. This topic will be revisited this summer AFTER the deployment of the new CAD.

Fire Training Site: John Fritz is moving from his full-time position at DES to full-time position as the Fire Training Site Superintendent. An advertisement for John's replacement at DES has been circulated.

Fire Police Association: All portable radios are now narrowband compliant.

P25 Radio Project:

1. Coverage in Albany Township: The Berks County Commissioners have authorized to pursue engineering studies for two additional sites. Other options have been considered but were found to be less successful (i.e. in-vehicle repeaters at fixed locations as well as in specific vehicles). The costs for engineering for the coverage hole in Port Clinton is estimated to be \$750,000-\$1,000,000, and \$750,000-\$1,250,000 for the coverage hole in northern Albany Township. It should be understood that this is NOT a guarantee that towers will be built at this time; the Commissioners have committed to engineering studies only. If approved, deployment at the existing Port Clinton site would improve some of the open holes in Tilden Township and Port Clinton Borough.
2. System Deployment Timing: The most current schedule is June, 2013 based on the ability to get all projected sites approved between local jurisdictions and zoning and related hang-ups. This could change if there are further delays. The delayed deployment serves as an advantage from a field testing standpoint, as there will likely be sufficient foliage on trees to conduct acceptance testing in an environment that is a more challenging test of performance (closer to full foliage the better).
3. Narrowband Waiver: The waiver has been completed and will likely be filed by April 15th. The FCC has already granted one waiver to another county in the United States working towards a similar radio project as ours.
4. Subscriber Agreements: Several municipalities' solicitors "pushed back" on some of the terms in the promissory note. The County's legal team is actively working on a solution.
5. Sites: All have completed National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) approvals except for: Albany, Hamburg, Ontelaunee, Cumru, Union, Bethel, and Blue Mountain. Of those tower sites, Hamburg, Ontelaunee, Cumru, and Union are not concerns. Bethel, and Albany sites will require an environmental impact study. Blue Mountain is still pending.
6. Portable Radios: To clarify, the portable radios for this project do NOT come standard with belt clips. Specific agencies have ordered belt clips, others have ordered carrying cases, and the remainder have ordered none.

Other Items:

1. Discussion occurred about delays in dispatch involving calls generated from out-of-county communications centers. In every investigation the delays continue to arise from the out-of-county communications centers.
2. It was noted that erroneous "double text messages" have been received. DES is investigating.

Zone 1: Nothing to report.

Zone 2: Nothing to report.

Zone 3: Nothing to report.

Zone 4: Nothing to report.

Zone 5/6: 6-7 companies in the zone were not yet contacted by RMI to finalize radio purchase orders. These companies were instructed to call RMI directly and schedule an appointment.

Zone 7: Nothing to report.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1930 hours. The next meeting will be Thursday, April 26, 2012 at the Direct Link building beginning at 1815 hours.

Respectfully Submitted,
Chris Stevens, Chairman